

CIA OPERATIONS CENTER

NEWS SERVICE

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(BY DANIEL GILMORE)

WASHINGTON (UPI) - A PANEL OF EDITORS AND COMMENTATORS AGREED TODAY JOURNALISTS SHOULD BE PUT OFF LIMITS TO THE CIA BUT DIFFERED ON WHETHER A SPECIFIC LAW WAS REQUIRED.

APPEARING BEFORE A SENATE INTELLIGENCE SUBCOMMITTEE WHICH IS DRAFTING A CHARTER AND GUIDELINES FOR THE CIA WERE RICHARD LEONARD, EDITOR OF THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL; PHILIP GEYELIN, EDITOR OF THE EDITORIAL PAGE OF THE WASHINGTON POST; KEITH FULLER, PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS; AND MIKE WALLACE, ANCHORMAN FOR THE CBS-TV 60 MINUTES PROGRAM.

LEONARD SAID, "THE STRAIGHT TRUTH; AND THERE IS NO WAY AROUND IT; IS THAT ANY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CIA WILL EITHER IMPAIR OR DESTROY THE CREDIBILITY OF A JOURNALIST IF THAT RELATIONSHIP IS DISCOVERED. FURTHER, THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE CIA HAS A RELATIONSHIP WITH ANY JOURNALIST, AMERICAN OR FOREIGN, CASTS SUSPICION UPON ALL JOURNALISTS."

FAVORING STATUTORY PROVISIONS OUTLINED IN A COMMITTEE DRAFT, LEONARD SAID THEY SHOULD GO FURTHER AND IN ADDITION TO REPORTERS SHOULD ALSO PLACE OUT OF BOUNDS TO THE CIA AMERICAN NEWS EXECUTIVES, EDITORS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, FREELANCERS AND FOREIGN REPORTERS.

GEYELIN, WHO SAID HE HAD WORKED FOR THE CIA IN WASHINGTON 28 YEARS AGO WHILE ON A YEAR'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, ARGUED FOR A BAN ON "SWAPPING INFORMATION" BETWEEN CIA AND JOURNALISTS AND CIA BRIEFINGS AND DEBRIEFINGS BEFORE AND AFTER A REPORTER GOES ABROAD. HE ALSO SAID THE CIA SHOULD BE PROHIBITED FROM HAVING PAID RELATIONSHIPS WITH FOREIGN JOURNALISTS.

GEYELIN SAID HE WAS DISTURBED A LAW WAS BEING CONSIDERED "IN ORDER TO SEND A MESSAGE ELSEWHERE" THAT THE AMERICAN MEDIA WAS NOT TAINTED. "I'M DUBIOUS OF LAWS," HE SAID. "LEGISLATING RULES IS DANGEROUS ... SELF-DISCIPLINE IS THE ANSWER."

FULLER SAID HE DIDN'T THINK LEGISLATION ITSELF WOULD DISPEL THE IMAGE THAT SOME U.S. REPORTERS HAVE CIA CONNECTIONS. WHAT WAS NEEDED, HE SAID, WAS ASSURANCE THE CIA HAS NO CONTACT WITH THE MEDIA - AND THAT MEDIA KEEP ITS DISTANCE FROM THE AGENCY.

WALLACE FAVORED LEGISLATION AND SAID IT SHOULD ALSO INCLUDE A BAN ON POSSIBLE CIA USE OF TELEVISION TECHNICIANS, SUCH AS SOUND AND LIGHT MEN, WHO ARE OFTEN FOREIGN NATIONALS ON TOURS WORKING ABROAD.